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1956 Annual Report

*California Region
of
Forest Service*

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE *** FOREST SERVICE



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Forest Service business is public business.

Each citizen is in a sense the owner of one share of stock in the national forest estate. As a stockholder he wants to know how his personal equity is being protected and improved by the managers and the other related work done by them.

This manager's report is designed to give you a concise account of progress and accomplishments of the past year by the Forest Service in the California Region.

A more comprehensive annual report by the Chief of the Forest Service covering nationwide activities is available for the year 1955. A similar report for 1956 is being prepared for early release.

Persons desiring more detailed information on specific activities may obtain it by contacting either the local Forest Supervisors or the Regional Office of the Forest Service, 630 Sansome Street, San Francisco 11, California.

ANNUAL REPORT
of the REGIONAL FORESTER

CALIFORNIA REGION, FOREST SERVICE

The year 1956 was a record breaking one for the national forests in California. Public use of the forests, as well as cash business volumes and values, expanded in all activities.

Timber cut on the 18 national forests increased 5-1/2 percent over the cut in the previous year. The value of the timber cut amounted to more than \$18,000,000. Receipts from sale of timber accounted for nearly 97 percent of all cash receipts from the sale or use of national forest resources in California.

Water yield from forest areas continued to grow in value and importance as demands for dependable supplies increased for power, irrigation, domestic, and industrial water. Water from the above-normal snow pack furnished better than usual sustained surface flows in streams during the summer.

The intense storms of last winter, in spite of flood damages, were favorable to good forage growth on the forest ranges.

Recreation use jumped another 10 percent over 1955 to a new high of 8-1/2 million recreation users of national forest lands.

A near record low in the number of man-caused fires was reached this year by intensified prevention efforts and increased public cooperation. This significant gain was dimmed by large watershed fire losses in Southern California during November and December and the tragedy which accompanied them.

Three Forest officers, 8 fire fighters and one tractor operator, 12 in all lost their lives fighting fire in the treacherous brush-lands of Southern California during the year.

These are highlights of progress and events relating to administration of the national forests. They are treated in more detail in appropriate subject headings which follow.

Two other important phases of Forest Service work should be mentioned as they are closely related to public forest administration activities. These are: Cooperative Work with the State, and Research.

During the year the State of California was assisted in: Providing fire protection on 14.5 million acres of non-federal land; Fire prevention education through the Smokey Bear program; Technical management assistance to 776 forest land owners; and, Production of 1-1/2 million trees in State forest nurseries--planted on 1600 acres of private and State owned forest lands.

Forest Research in California is carried on by the California Forest and Range Experiment Station -- a branch of the Forest Service cooperating closely with the National Forests, the State, and private land managers. The Director of the Experiment Station prepares a report each year on progress and findings. This report and other technical publications are available to those who wish them.

NATIONAL FOREST ADMINISTRATION

Resources, Services and Management Benefits:

The Soil Resource:

Soil is the basic resource in the management of national forest lands. All other resources depend on soil for the benefits they might produce. Protective and corrective measures must be employed to avoid loss or damage if they are to sustain productivity.

Protective measures in part, consisted of careful location and adequate drainage of roads, trails, and skidways as these necessary disturbances can cause unacceptable soil movement by erosion. Corrective measures were used to stabilize soils and minimize damage where needed, consistent with available means.

The Water Resource:

The national forests of California are so situated that they intercept and yield one half of the surface run-off water of the State. Proper management of these watersheds for the maximum production of usable water is of primary importance to the economic stability and welfare of the State and its residents.

Watershed management is the protection and improvement management of the plant cover and stabilization of the soil mantle. Watershed management is actually accomplished through proper recognition and treatment in the harvesting of timber and forage crops and protection from fire.

During 1956 more attention was given and more restrictive measures were taken in resource use and development because of watershed values.

Occasionally, restoration of plant cover is necessary after severe fires. Three large watershed burns that occurred in November on the San Bernardino and Cleveland national forests were seeded in an effort to quickly re-establish protective plant cover. Plans are in progress to protect down stream values through channel improvements and structures.

The Timber Resource:

The cut of timber from the national forests for the year ending June 30, 1956 was 1,055,706,000 board feet. Final tabulations are not available for the calendar year, January to December, but preliminary information indicates a harvest in excess of 1 billion board feet. The "softening" lumber market during the last half of 1956 was noticeably reflected in the cutting rate. The average price received was \$17.10 per thousand board feet.

Salvage of fire killed and damaged timber from the large fires of 1955, amounting in total to some 235 million board feet, was about 75 percent complete by the end of the 1956 logging season.

Access Roads -- 267 miles of permanent system roads and an additional 530 miles of temporary spur logging roads were newly constructed or reconstructed during the year. About 90 percent of the permanent roads and all of the temporary road mileage was constructed by timber purchasers under provisions of their contracts.

Increased appropriations for timber management accelerated progress in gathering more accurate timber inventories, and completion of detailed management plans. Extension of aerial photo coverage to provide up-to-date information was accomplished during the year. Timber stand mapping on aerial photos was completed for parts of the Modoc, Lassen, Plumas, Tahoe, and Eldorado National Forests.

Planting and Seeding ---- 6,025,000 trees were produced and shipped from the Forest Service nurseries at Mt. Shasta and Oakdale. 5 million trees were planted on 3,860 acres of last year's burns at an average cost of \$55.14 per acre. 1 million trees were supplied to other organizations. 125 acres were seeded directly using some 300 pounds of tree seed.

Diseases and Insects --- Initial Blister Rust work was completed on 36,600 acres of selected sugar pine management areas of the State this year.

Ownership of the treated lands this year was divided about equally between national forests, national parks, and State & private lands. The Forest Service provided the technical supervision. 90 percent of the work was done under contract to private parties. The average contract price was \$10.24 per acre.

Insect threats to the forest during 1956 was generally at a low level. The Forest Service program of making sales of infested and high risk trees to reduce chances of a build-up of bark beetles continued this year as an effective control measure. Further progress can be accomplished in years to come in reducing threats and losses as better access to forest areas is developed.

A large cooperative aerial spraying project was successfully completed in the summer on 10,000 acres in the Stanislaus national forest to stop an epidemic of Tussock moth, which feeds on the needles of white fir. This project was done in cooperation with private land owners and the State.

The Recreation Resource

The national forests of California provided recreational opportunities for 8-1/2 million visitors this year. This use of the forests is increasing at the rate of 10 to 15 percent each year with no indication of diminishing in the near future.

The Angeles and San Bernardino national forests have the heaviest recreational use of any other forests areas. The 2-1/2 million visits to these two forests in 1955 exceeded the number of recreational visitors to the four great National Parks in the Region during the same period.

Sanitation and public use problems in Forest Service campgrounds were greatly alleviated with the increased funds made available this year.

A more adequate job of care and policing was accomplished. In addition a few new improvements and rehabilitation of sanitary facilities were completed where needs were most urgent.

Campgrounds damaged or destroyed during the floods of last winter were about 70 percent repaired or replaced.

Baldwin Beach, on the south shore of Lake Tahoe, was opened and used by some 200,000 swimmers. This public beach area provided a much needed expansion to the popular Pope Beach, opened several years ago, which itself accommodated 300,000 swimmers and bathers during the year.

Winter sports, one of the fastest growing uses of the national forests, attracted 1-1/2 million visits to developed areas. To meet the growing demand for this use permits have been issued or solicitation of bids are in process for development of resort facilities at China Peak, Mammoth Mountain, Mammoth Junction, and on the slopes of Mt. Shasta. Except for paving construction of one half of the 14 miles of the new all weather Everitt Memorial Highway to the Mt. Shasta site was completed.

Public safety in the use of ski tows, lifts and apparatus is now better assured through safety inspections and enforcement of an approved safety code by the engineers of the State Division of Industrial Safety. This is a fine example of cooperative working relations with the State in protecting users of public forest lands.

A permit is now in the final process of approval covering the development by the State of 1960 Winter Olympic facilities on national forest land at Squaw Valley.

Increased public demands for trailer camps in the forest are being met by the issuance of permits for development of trailer courts by private operators.

During the year 1 Wilderness and 4 Wild Areas were reclassified from Primitive Area status, an obsolete classification, to a more secure reservation status under Department of Agriculture Regulations U-1 and U-2. (These are Yolla Bolly, Hoover, Cucamonga, San Geronio, and Thousand Lakes.)

The Forage Resource:

Eight million acres or 40 percent of the national forest acreage in California is used for permitted livestock grazing by 1200 permittees.

100,000 head of cattle and 90,000 head of sheep were grazed under permit on national forest lands during 1956. An additional 22,000 head of cattle and 36,000 sheep were permitted to graze which represents the carrying capacity of the intermingled private lands, used in common with forest ranges.

An estimated 20 million pounds of meat are produced each year as a marketable product from the forage consumed.

Livestock use is correlated with forage needs of a deer herd of about 600,000 head.

Progress is being made in a long term program of improving forage production and livestock management utilization of the full production potentials of the land.

The majority of the 945 grazing allotments now are in an acceptable condition of balance between forage supplies and domestic livestock use.

Type Conversion:

The total successful type conversion in the Region to date is about 9,000 acres. Controlled burn was used in clearing one third of this and the balance was chemically treated to kill the brush prior to seeding. In addition 16,000 acres of accidental burn has been treated to improve forage supplies and wildlife habitat.

The Wildlife Resource:

Management of the wildlife on the national forest is a function and responsibility of the State Department of Fish and Game. Management of the plant resources which provide the food, and shelter to sustain wildlife is the responsibility of the Forest Service. The need for a very close working relationship between the two agencies is obvious.

The national forests of California support one half of the State's 1,200,000 deer. Under the buck law the take on national forest land has been about 30,000 animals in recent years. This is approximately double the population and kill of 20 years ago.

The growing deer population has brought rather wide spread overgrazing on important deer winter ranges; increased depredations on private property and lowered productivity of the undernourished deer herds.

The Forest Service has worked closely with the Department of Fish and Game for the past few years to secure understanding and public acceptance of a program for more efficient deer management. As a result a 3-day either sex deer season was tried in 33 counties at the end of the regular buck season in 1956.

Conclusions after studying the results of the hunt indicate that no deer herd was overshot. In fact, a larger kill for the State as a whole could be sustained. Sufficient reduction in deer numbers was accomplished on only a few of the over populated winter ranges. Continued effort to control deer numbers is needed to halt progressive damage.

The Mineral Resource:

Considerable progress was made toward implementing the new mining law (Public Law #167), 1956. Preliminary examinations were completed on 630,000 acres covering mineralized zones on seven national forests. Work on these areas is in various stages of completion toward clearing up their use for harvesting government timber and other appropriate uses of national forest lands.

Fire Protection:

The 1956 fire season on the national forests was below average in severity in northern California. Southern California forests were hard hit during the last three months of the year due to cumulative moisture deficiency, high temperatures, and prolonged periods of Santa Ana winds of gale force.

The year's fire record shows 2,087 fires of which 1,505 were lightning caused and 582 were man-caused. Thunderstorm activity throughout the Region during July and August resulted in the second largest number of lightning fires of record. The 582 man-caused fires, on the other hand, is slightly greater than the 576 fires last year which was a record low for the past 30 years. Smokers still lead the list of causes with 31 percent of the man-caused fires.

National forest land burned during the year was 72,668 acres compared with an average of 108,748 acres for the past 5 years.

A conservative estimate of damages to timber, watersheds, and improvements amounts to about 7 million dollars.

This year marked the first operational use of air tankers as a fire control tool. A squadron of 7 contract crop-duster planes was used on 25 fires. They flew about 1,000 hours, dropping 150,000 gallons of chemical fire retardents mixed in water. The most effective chemical retardent used was a Sodium Calcium compound.

An additional 7,000 hours were flown by aircraft in fire control. 71.6% of all aircraft use was by private contract planes and helicopters. 9,461 men were transported, 119 tons of paracargo and 295 tons of freight at a cost of \$391,686.

Smokejumpers, another air-borne tool in fire control, made 197 jumps on 48 fires. Smokejumper use was confined to suppression of back-country lightning fires.

Suppression action on the ground is being continually improved and speeded up to control fires when they are small. Better roads, use of bulldozers, tank trucks and hard hitting trained crews demonstrated their effectiveness this year by controlling 95 percent of the fires at less than 1000 acres.

Prevention of fires is being vigorously promoted through mass media and personal contacts. Results are measurable in the continued downward trend in man-caused fires. Much credit is due newspapers, radio, T.V., business, utilities, and other governmental and private organizations and groups for their cooperation in prevention activities.

The four southern California forests -- Los Padres, Angeles, San Bernardino and Cleveland -- present problems of use and protection peculiar to that area.

Steep, rugged, inaccessible terrain, explosively inflammable brush cover, the direct threat of flood to populations below and large numbers of people desiring to use the mountain areas as playgrounds add up to complex problems of management.

The large, disastrous fires in southern California forests during November 1956 focus attention on the extreme protection problem and potential flood aftermath. Cumulative moisture deficiency, high

temperatures and strong winds combined to create a condition that stubbornly resisted the best efforts of all mutual fire control forces for days.

Following the watershed fires of 1956, the Forest Service, flood control agencies and other interested groups immediately merged and prepared flood prevention programs. These plans included reseeded of burned areas, stream channel improvement, debris basins and spreading works, all designed to lessen the impact of probable flood run-off. As a result the Forest Service by airplane and helicopter has reseeded some 56,586 acres on three burns using some 210 tons of grass seed for rapid establishment of ground cover. Channel improvements are to follow as rapidly as possible, all agencies cooperating.

State and Private Forestry:

Timber Resource Review:

During 1956, report copies and summaries of the nation's Timber Resource Review were made available for wide distribution to interested people. Detailed statistical and more generalized summaries are still available at all Forest Supervisors' Headquarters and in the Regional Office in San Francisco.

Agricultural Act of 1956:

The Agricultural Act of 1956, often called by its first section "The Soil Bank", became law in 1956. This Act, in addition to its conservation reserve and other commodity provisions, provides for a reforestation program which may have far reaching effects in restocking the idle forest lands of the state. Through the State Forester, when implemented by appropriations from Congress, it will encourage a much needed program of reforestation in California.

To date, the principle activity has been to inform people about the Act and its provisions. In the several years ahead, an expanded forest tree nursery program may be required.

CONDENSED STATEMENT RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURES
CALIFORNIA REGION - FOREST SERVICE
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FISCAL YEAR 1956

	<u>RECEIPTS*</u>	<u>EXPENDITURES</u>	
		Operating	Investments
National Forest & L. U. Proj. Protection and Management		\$ 6,521,186.83	\$ 403,875.76
Fighting Forest Fires		6,904,697.53	4,780.66
Blister Rust Control		244,646.36	1,250.00
Forest Pest Control		47,591.17	- 0 -
Cooperative Range Improvements		25,970.27	14,797.33
Roads and Trails - Const. and Maint.		1,685,086.50	4,428,695.25
Flood Prev. and Watershed Prot.		339,517.69	208,874.57
National Forest Receipts			
Forest Reserve Fund	\$21,047,160.82		
Land Use Areas (Title III Farm Tenant Act)	6,136.71		
Other Misc. Receipts	129,332.84		
TOTALS - Calif. Region	\$21,182,630.37	\$15,768,696.35	\$5,062,273.57

Cash receipts exceeded Operating Expenditures by \$5,413,934.

*25% of receipts returned to California Counties for roads and schools totaled \$5,294,355.57.

**Thanks, Folks,
for being careful!**



Remember - Only you can
PREVENT FOREST FIRES!